

Mayor James F. Brown and the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) today released details regarding its proposed 2011 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan. The public has 30 days (until October 27) to provide comments regarding the proposed strategy before it is submitted to the Common Council for approval at the Wednesday, October 27 Council meeting and to HUD by November 17, 2010. The City anticipates estimated funding for 2011 to be \$1,299,772, the same amount approved for program year 2010.

"Municipalities across the nation are experiencing some of their most difficult fiscal challenges in decades. I firmly believe that the only way we are going to meet these challenges is by facing them as a community. Input from elected officials, neighborhoods, citizens, and the business community is critical to the allocation of these dollars. Our CDBG grant is a good model for citizen participation," said Mayor Brown.

According to the CDAC chair and third ward councilor, Kim Rogers. "The City strives for high levels of public input when determining its annual CDBG spending plan and we encourage the public to offer their comments prior to October 27. The volunteer Community Development Advisory Committee members carefully review all public comments when determining how these funds are best utilized and their insight and service on the committee are both valued and appreciated."

Over half of the responders to the CDBG Community Survey on the City's website indicated that Streets and Sidewalk Improvements, Small Business and Microenterprise Assistance, and Parks and Recreational Facilities should be the City's three top priorities in 2011. After reviewing comments and requests from both residents and agencies, the CDAC made the following recommendations to the Mayor for 2011:

HOUSING - \$220,000 in funding will be provided for:

eNipProgram - the enhanced Neighborhood Improvement Program will provide forgivable loans for rehabilitation substandard housing, including emergency repairs and improvements which enable elderly and mobility impaired persons to have improved access to their homes.

REAL PROPERTY ACTIVITIES - \$125,000 in funding will be provided for:

Acquisition and Demolition – funding will be used for eligible costs associated with the purchase or demolition of strategic or substandard commercial and residential buildings necessary for street and neighborhood improvement efforts and other CDBG activities.

PUBLIC FACILITIES - \$414,772 in funding will be provided for:

Streets - \$374,772 in Public Infrastructure improvements and reconstruction to include, but not limited, to streets, curbs, sidewalks, trees and utility upgrades in target areas

Parks – \$40,000 in funds will be used for eligible facility upgrades and improvements in CDBG Target Area Parks to include security improvements.

PUBLIC SERVICES - \$100,000 in funding will be provided for:

Funding will be allocated to organizations and agencies to provide job training, employment, at-risk youth, and homeless and crime-prevention and awareness services and assistance. The City will continue to accept applications until December 30, 2011, and the CDAC will review applications in January obligate the funds.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - \$190,000 in funding will be provided for:

REAP – \$120,000 in Rome Entrepreneur Assistance Program funding will be provided for grants and loans to eligible microenterprises and small businesses with a focus on the Main Streets target area.

Commercial Rehabilitation Program - \$70,000 will be provided to owners of commercial buildings located in the downtown Main Streets target area.

ADMINISTRATION – \$250,000 (19.3%) in funding will be provided for:

Administration of the CDBG program - pays for staff and materials necessary to “monitor” the CDBG program in general, along with any in-house delivered project and each subrecipient project.

According to Diane Shoemaker, director of Community and Economic Development, “ Federal Guidelines require a 15% cap on Public Service funding; administrative fees cannot exceed 20%; and, at least 70% of program funds must be dedicated to low and moderate income persons and areas. Rome’s proposed plan for 2011 allocates 7.7% to Public Services; 19.3 % for program oversight; and at least 80.7% of the total program funds are dedicated to low to moderate areas and individuals.”

CDAC Members include Kim Rogers, Third Ward Councilor and Chair, John Sparace, First Ward Councilor, John Mortise, Second Ward Councilor, George Kiskiel, John Longieretta, Jim O’Rourke, Betty Sabia, Joseph Sallustio, and Paula Tagliere. Department of Community and Economic Development advisors include Diane Shoemaker, Christian Mercurio and Carol Brigandi.

Any citizen wishing to comment on the proposed 2011 Annual Plan may contact a CDAC member, or do so either in writing to the Department of Community & Economic Development, City Hall, 198 N. Washington Street, Rome, New York 13440, by calling 339-7643, or by e-mail to dshoemaker@romecitygov.com. The community may also access a CDBG Survey from the City’s webpage, www.romenewyork.com. Comments may be directed to the Department of Community & Economic Development until 4:30 pm, Wednesday, October 27, 2010. The Annual Plan will first be submitted to the Rome Common Council for approval and then to the U. S. Department of Housing & Community Development, Buffalo, New York, no later than November 17, 2010. Interpretive and other services for deaf, non-English speaking, or mobility impaired persons will be provided with a 48-hour notice.